

ABSTRACT

A telephone station interface is provided with apparatus for detecting when a called party has or is attempting to patch or bridge one telephone call with another telephone call. The detecting of such bridging or conferencing is accomplished through the detection of tones which are commonly associated with such activities, such as a ring signal, a busy signal, special information tones (SIT tones), dual tone multi-frequency (DTMF) tones or so-called Touch Tones, call progress tones, or other tones that occur when calls are placed. The present invention does not have the capability of sensing clicks, pops, or other audio signals associated with the conferencing of multiple communications circuits. The method and apparatus herein are for managing institutional telephone activity, and utilize a computer control unit to control a trunk management unit, which connects institutional telephones to outside telephone lines.